

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

COUNTRY Korea
SUBJECT Postal and Telegraph Services,
North Korea

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REFERENCES

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. On 18 March 1953 all North Korean post offices were controlled by the Ministry of Communications. Regular mail cost 10 won per letter and registered letters cost 30 won.¹ Officials of the Social Security Department censored all mail but carefully resealed the envelopes so that it would not appear they had been opened. All mail for foreign countries was sent first to P'yongyang where it was censored again before it was forwarded. Mail between Wonsan and Kaesong was carefully checked and the names of both the addressee and the addressor, as well as the date of mailing were filed.² No private telegraph service was available on 18 March.

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2. Mail delivery time between certain North Korean cities on 18 March was as follows:

- a. Between Wonsan and P'yongyang; seven days for registered mail and 14 days for regular mail.
- b. Between Wonsan and Hamhung; three days for registered mail and five days for regular mail.
- c. Between Hamhung and Songjin; five days for registered mail and 10 days for regular mail.
- d. Between Songjin and Ch'ongjin; four days for registered mail and seven days for regular mail.

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- e. Between Ch'ongjin and Najin; three days for registered mail and five days for regular mail.
 - f. Between Ch'ongjin and Hoeryong; three days for registered mail and five days for regular mail.
 - g. Between Ch'ongjin and Musan (N 42-14 E 129-13) (EB-1875); four days for registered mail and seven days for regular mail.
 - h. Between Wonsan and Hyesanjin (N 41-24 E 128-11) (DA-3283); ten days for registered mail and 15 days for regular mail.
3. The mail delivery time between certain North Korean cities in February was as follows:
- a. From P'yongyang to Sinuiju; 10 to 15 days.
 - b. From P'yongyang to Hamhung; 10 to 15 days.
 - c. From P'yongyang to Ch'ongjin, Najin, and Namyang (N 42-58 E 129-51) (EC-6957); 15 to 20 days.
 - d. From P'yongyang to Hwanghae Province; seven to 10 days.
 - e. From P'yongyang to Wonsan; seven to 15 days.
 - f. From Ch'ongjin to Haeju; 20 to 30 days.
 - g. From Ch'ongjin to Sinuiju; 20 to 30 days.
4. On 16 March regular mail postage stamps in North Korea were issued in denominations of one won, six won and 10 won. Regular mail between P'yongyang and Haeju took 25 days for delivery while registered mail, which cost 40 won, was delivered in two or three days. A special registered stamp cost 100 won. Packages weighing less than two grams could be sent within North Korea for 100 won. Mail from North Korea to China cost 200 won. Letters mailed in the Soviet Union arrived in Yonbaek-gun, Hwanghae Province, approximately seven days after they were posted. Regular mail and packages were transported and delivered by trucks, Soviet-made motorcycles and bicycles.
5. On 16 March an ordinary telegram between P'yongyang and Haeju cost three North Korean won per group of characters and was delivered in approximately five hours.³ A special telegram between Haeju and Sinuiju cost six won per group of characters and was delivered in 48 hours. Special telegrams were used only for official government business. All telegrams were received at the myon (district) post offices for forwarding to the gun (county) and city post offices for transmittal.
6. In February 1953 letters in North Korea were collected by a postman who traveled through the rural areas once every two or three days. The people gave the postman the letter along with the necessary cash for the stamps. Regular mail cost 10 won and registered mail cost 40 won. Registered mail facilities were seldom used because of the strict censorship placed on that type of mail. No packages were accepted but there was no weight limit on letters. Return post cards consisting of a sheet of paper folded into four sections with the address on the outside were in use. All mail within North Korea was required to have the Korean characters in onmun, the Korean alphabet, and the name of the sender on the reverse side of the letter. Letters destined for China were required to have the address written in Chinese characters and letters destined for the Soviet Union were required to have the address in Cyrillic letters and the word "Russia" written in Chinese characters. In December 1952 all letters were cut open, read and stamped "Military Censorship Completed." Prior to December 1952 the chairmen of village People's Committees censored the letters and notified the myon Social Security Department of anything suspicious.


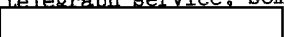


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- 25X1A 1.  Comment. For previous information on North Korean postal and
25X1A telegraph service, some of it contradictory to that in this report, see

- 25X1A 2.  Comment. It is not clear whether this system was in use throughout
North Korea or applied only to mail between Wonsan and Kaesong.
- 25X1A 3.  Comment. Please note that paragraphs 1 and 5 are from different
sources.

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